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XII. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

1. The Associate Administrator introduced the report on the Human Development Report (DP/1995/34). He informed the Executive Board that the 1995 Report had been completed and would be launched on 17 August 1995. An advance copy would be shared with the Executive Board in early July 1995. He said that UNDP hoped that by supporting the production of a report that retained the essential element of editorial independence, a contribution to the debate on development issues could continue, without prejudice or predetermination of the character of the UNDP programme. A number of steps had been taken to structure the review process to enhance the accuracy and quality of the analysis as well as its intellectual integrity. The statistical accuracy of the Report had also been improved through work with international agencies who had responsibilities for standardizing and harmonizing international data sets. Three rounds of consultations with Member States had been held during the previous year. Advisory panels and peer reviews were also introduced.

2. Several delegations emphasized the importance and usefulness of the Human Development Report as a tool for furthering human development, particularly in its current context. Its role in determining trends in development was also noted. Several speakers underlined the need for its editorial independence. Others praised the increased transparency of the process and the increased accuracy of the Report. Several speakers cited the national attention in their countries to the Report, particularly when translated into the official language of that country. The Report garnered much favourable media attention.

3. Some speakers asked for more information regarding the consultations held during the previous year. One delegation stressed that the Executive Board should have a greater role in the finalization of the report given UNDP funding of the Report and sought clarification on the status of funding of the Report by UNDP. The same delegation noted that it would have preferred that the Board adopt a decision reflecting the above instead of only taking note of the Report.

4. One delegation asked how the findings of the Report helped developing countries in practical terms, including assistance with programming and identification of problems. Information on the topics of future reports and summaries of the first five reports were requested.

5. Several delegations noted that the use of statistics in the Report had been strengthened and expressed support for the addition of a statistician to the Human Development Report Office.

6. The Associate Administrator detailed the consultative process leading up to publication of the 1995 Human Development Report. He explained that since the Report was not an intergovernmental document it did not need to be fully endorsed by an intergovernmental body. He informed the meeting that the two eminent consultants working in relation to the report in 1995 were Ms. Margaret Catley-Carlsson, President of the Population Council and Professor Lincoln Chin, Director of Population and Development Studies at Harvard University.

7. The Director of the Human Development Report Office explained that the goal of the office was to build on past strengths and eliminate perceived weaknesses. Data was a principal area of preoccupation with a continuing process needed. Statistics and data were collected at the country level and a global effort was needed to improve indicators. Data used in the report was the latest and most viable but weaknesses reflected differences at the country level.

8. The Executive Board took note of the report on the Human Development Report (DP/1995/34).